

Empirical Investigation of a Postmodern Model of Spirituality within the Population of Republic of Ireland

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Abstract

Spirituality is a phenomenon which continues to attract much interest in the Western culture. Throughout the years, it has changed in form and developed in understanding. It has become unprecedentedly broad and embraced by many people, even those who do not consider themselves to be religious. Indeed, spirituality is a subject of debate within academic and non-academic circles regarding its shape, place, function, and definition. This debate and the academic investigation reveals that as a field of study it is undergoing intense and vigorous development. However, there are a number of conceptual deficiencies which need attention, namely; identity and method. The aim of this study is to develop the concept of spirituality according to the current European population. The study applies Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) and finds current spirituality functioning as a three-dimensional model composed of transcendence, immanence, and purpose. This concept is predicted by thirteen independent variables. The findings conclude that current spirituality is a person's individual existential dimension, being subject to change through the influence of various psychological, religious and social factors. The findings of the research describe its practical implication within formational social fields such as education, counselling, and psychotherapy.

Keywords: spirituality, religion, counselling, quantitative research methods, SEM

Introduction

The concept of spirituality functioning within the western world (Flanagan, 1999) started to emerge within the Judeo-Christian tradition around three thousand years ago, (Schneiders, 2005). Frohlich (2007), confirms the precedence of the Christian tradition in the creation of spirituality as an identifiable subject, as does Sheldrake (1995; 2009). In more recent years however, since spirituality detached itself from religion, a lot has been done to identify and understand it as a new phenomenon (Harmon, Mausbach, Atkinson & Gallagher-Thompson, 1985; Reed, 1992; Oldnall, 1996; Zinnbauer, Pargament, Cole, Rye, Butter, Belavich, Hipp, Scott & Kadar, 1997; Perrin, 2010). While religion ceased to be a monopolist provider of content for spiritual life, spirituality appeared as a neglected discipline. At the same time, it crossed academic thresholds and was almost immediately adopted by secular fields such as healthcare (King, 2000), workplace (Garcia-Zamor, 2003), feminist (Clifford, 2005), or, even atheist environments (Comte-Sponville, 2009). As a new phenomenon, it has weak conceptual boundaries and methodological qualities, and it has started to function within these new and various settings in an uninhibited, but often also uncontrolled or even disorganised manner. As a result, representatives of various academic and non-academic disciplines can take part in spiritual discourse without questioning their competency in the subject. The term spirituality is often applied without an understanding or at least a uniform agreement as to the identity of the domain.

Ellison (1983) was one of the first people to begin categorising an identification of spirituality in a new form and was a pioneer in developing a quantitative approach within the discipline by introducing the Spiritual Well-Being Scale (SWBS) (Ellison, 1983). Later, Elkins, Hedstrom, Hughes, Leaf, and Saunders (1988), conceptualised spirituality within a theoretical model based on the humanistic approach; using concepts of spirituality presented by key intellectual thinkers such as Abraham Maslow, John Dewey, William James, Erich Fromm, Victor Frankl, and Carl Young. This model comprised of nine components: the

transcendent dimension, meaning, and purpose in life, the mission in life, sacredness of life, material values, altruism, idealism, awareness of tragic, and fruits of spirituality.

Progress on the path of holistic comprehension of spirituality from the secular perspective started with Mobergs' (1986) studies, which offered a two-dimension understanding; with a vertical dimension relating to God and divine reality and, a horizontal sphere referring to the earthly aspects of life/purpose. Unruh, Versnel and Kerr (2002) suggest a three-dimensional perception of spirituality; comprising of transcendent, and immanent dimension with a further element organising purposefulness of human life. Likewise, Hyman and Handal (2006) support a two-factor approach to spirituality focusing on the internal and subjective sphere of experience with divine reality or God. However, despite the emergence of theoretical models and empirical evidence, the realm of spirituality was still viewed as a new and '*fuzzy*' concept (Spilka, 1993; Spilka & McIntosh, 1996), and perhaps remains as such today (Harvey, 2016).

Schneiders (2003), and Sheldrake (2003) propose that spirituality comprehends the human condition in mundane reality, where individuals search for spiritual fulfilment in secular life, and divine relation to God and faith. This perception was confirmed by Kielkiewicz and Delzell (2014), exploring the identity of spirituality in its origins. Similarly, spirituality can be viewed as the coexistence of two orders, firstly; life experience with practice, values, deeds within community, family and cultural circumstances and secondly; in the context of search for the ultimate truth, self-reflection, development of ability to fulfilment and dedication of one's own life to others by conversion and prayer (Spohn, 1997).

All these theories are converging to some degree; nevertheless, there is a discussion in understanding the meaning and nature of spirituality. Thus, some researchers emphasise the divine aspect (Reed, 1987; Walton, 1999); hope (Dubree & Vogelopohl, 1980); practice (Liebert, 2002) and human suffering (Lindholm & Eriksson, 1993). Others, however, have viewed spirituality more multidimensionality, as an embracing human relation to God, to

nature and to the community, where people have friends and family, and live with other people (Miller & Martin, 1988).

Christian-theological tradition represented by Conway (2007) suggested more multidimensional explanation of spirituality where spirituality is sourced in human spirit, which manifests its being in seven main dimensions: (i) spirituality unifies different spheres of life such as emotional, moral, social and political, (ii) it transcends human self and human communal life, (iii) it strives for new possibilities and develops quality of life, (iv) it takes control over nature, (v) recognizes transcendent dimension of life, (vi) unifies differences and (vii) it allows to accept the tragic dimension of life such as death or suffering.

Evidence obtained from the field of medicine and healthcare reported over thirty spiritual concepts such as the purpose of life, relation to happiness and self-realisation, dialog with self, relation with the community, references to transcendent dimension or undefined supernatural sphere of life and ability to transcend own self (McCarroll-Butler, 2005). Similarly, Galek, Flannelly, Vane and Galek (2005) reported, within a sample of hospital chaplains and patients that spirituality is about finding purpose in life, fulfilment, happiness and then transcendence in face of suffering and death. Another patient study reported that spirituality is perceived as to be a relationship with God through faith and prayers, and existential scope with participation within the community (Rovers, Baker, Konu, Leith, Lush, & Moulton, 2001). Among numerous elements that influence spirituality, another factor has been identified in the research to have a significant impact on spirituality; that is self-esteem (Johnson, Sandler & Griffin-Shelley, 1988; Bradshaw, 1988; Lindgren & Coursey, 1995; Crocker & Wolfe, 2001; Crocker & Park, 2004; Hawke, Hennen & Gallione, 2005). A further qualitative study has indicated the importance of culture in the shaping of spirituality (Beaudoin, 1998; Flanagan, 1999; Lynch, 2002; Finnegan, 2008; Porter, 2009; Perrin, 2010). Additionally, Taves (2003) explored the perspective of spirituality functioning in cultural context from the historical and current viewpoint as discipline for the purposes of human formation. Recently, Rovers and

Kocum (2010) developed and tested a conceptual model of spirituality using quantitative statistical techniques. They applied structural equation modelling (SEM), whereby the conceptual model using three factors of Faith, Hope and Love was statistically tested.

Despite these contributions during the past forty-years of spirituality as an academic discipline, it still appears as largely undefined. A comprehensive study within the field needs to be conducted in order to develop a holistic and commonly accepted concept of spirituality, which regards, thousands-year tradition, postmodern social trends, and recent academic findings. This is a necessary step in order to progress spirituality as an academic domain. Spirituality needs to adapt its own method, respectively in the research field as well as in its practice. These aspects are compulsory in order of progressing spirituality and gaining respect as one of the academic disciplines. Therefore, the main objective of the current study is to propose a new theoretical model (see Figure 1) and validate it within a large adult sample using structural modelling techniques.

Method

Participants and procedure

Once ethical approval was granted, an opportunistic sampling approach was undertaken. Data was collected around the Midland and Dublin regions of the Republic of Ireland, with the permission of several libraries, churches, and colleges. Participants were informed as to the nature of the study and that their participation was voluntary. Guidelines were provided on how to complete the survey. Participants were assured of confidentiality and anonymity as their responses were to be anonymous and returned in a non-identifiable sealed envelope. The voluntary nature of participation was outlined and the withdrawal from the process was possible at any stage.

The sample included two hundred and sixty eight ($N = 268$) participants of which there were; 175 females (65.3 %), 91 males (34%). Ages ranged from 18 to 78 years, with an average

age of 32.65 years ($M = 32.65$, $SD = 12.97$) and most (72.4 %; $n = 194$) came from urban background. Additionally, 4.5 % ($n = 12$) received only primary school education, 8.6% ($n = 23$) received secondary school education, a further 23.5 % ($n = 63$) had unfinished college/university, and 63.1% ($n = 169$) had completed college/university education. 2.2% ($n = 6$) did not state their education level. Regarding to marital status; 62.3% ($n = 167$) were single, 24.6% ($n = 66$) were married, 6% ($n = 16$) were divorced/separated, 1.1% ($n = 3$) were widowed, and 6 % ($n = 16$) did not provided information. Religious affiliation/non-affiliation reported that; 53.7% were Roman Catholics ($n = 144$), 8.6% were Protestants ($n = 23$), 6.3% were ‘*other Christian*’ ($n = 17$), 10.4% were ‘*believer but not religious*’ ($n = 28$), 5.6% were atheists ($n = 15$) and 4.9% did not provide information ($n = 13$). In all, 53.4% ($n = 143$) rated themselves as spiritual, 9.3% ($n = 25$) as non-spiritual, 31.3% ($n = 84$) as ‘*neither*’, and 6% ($n = 16$) did not provided information.

Postmodern Model of Spirituality (PMS) measures

The PMS contains three main factors of *Transcendence*, *Immanence*, and *Purpose*. Table 1 contains information on each of the main factors, their respective subscales with related items.

Transcendence reflects the supernatural dimension of spiritual life. This was measured by two scales: *God* and *Faith*. *God* refers to the existence of a personal or philosophical absolute being within transcendent reality. *Faith* examined the human in relation to God which, represents divine religious or/and spiritual reality (unreachable physically). The belief in a reality that functions beyond time, matter and without proof or evidence. Reliability statistics reported favourable internal consistency (*God*: Cronbach’s $\alpha = .76$; *Faith*: Cronbach’s $\alpha = .89$).

Immanence represents the opposite reality to transcendence and reflects the mundane dimension of people's spiritual life and life in general. It is related to the existential meaning of people's life such as; dealing with the financial world, purposes, and responsibilities in life. It also refers to social relations with other people. *Immanence* was measured by two scales of

Community and *Material Values*. The *Community* subscale reflects the interactions between people, who share the same environment and contained three items (see Table 1). *Material Values* reflects material things that exist in the world and are used by people in everyday life. Reliability statistics for *Material Values* (Cronbach's $\alpha = .71$) and for *Community* (Cronbach's $\alpha = .46$).

Purpose refers to the aims of spiritual life which reflect the reality or condition in which individuals behold a purpose behind their spiritual struggle. Purpose corresponds to a quality of life that aims to be reached by personal development such as the ability to undertake actions, learning more about the reality of life, reaching happiness, acceptance of problematic aspects of life, or formation of virtues. *The Purpose* was measured by *Deed*, *Ultimate Truth*, *Happiness*, *Existence*, *Sacrifice*, and *Formation*. *Deed* corresponds to the participant's ability to undertake constructive actions or an activity stimulated by spiritual motives. *Ultimate Truth* measures participant's belief in the presence of one truth that is opposite to all the relativistic and unidentified worldviews and philosophies of life. *Happiness* measured participant's beliefs that happiness, contentment or pleasures are the ultimate purposes of human life. *Existence* measures participant's acceptance of tragic aspects of human life, such as surviving, death and suffering. *Sacrifice* examines participant's understanding and the ability of sacrifice, the evaluation that one's own life is valuable, a desired quality of life, and the ability to dedicate one's life for others. Lastly, *Formation* measured participant's level of conviction that spirituality should be used for human formation in the development of human character, thus gaining personal improvement. Overall, internal consistency was reported to be favorable for *Deed* (Cronbach's $\alpha = .73$), *Ultimate Truth* (Cronbach's $\alpha = .85$), *Sacrifice* (Cronbach's $\alpha = .82$) and *Formation* (Cronbach's $\alpha = .79$); however, *Happiness* (Cronbach's $\alpha = .42$) and *Existence* (Cronbach's $\alpha = .35$) reported less than favourable internal consistency.

Table 1

Spirituality factors with associated Cronbach's alpha coefficients

Spirituality Factors	Alpha
Transcendence	
God	.76
God is someone who loves me the most	
God is an idea which does not exist in reality	
It is possible to live according to God's will	
Faith	.89
Faith is important in my life	
Most of the time, the faith helps me to cope with my everyday problems	
Faith helps me to evaluate my life	
Immanence	
Community	.46
Life is most worthwhile when is lived in service to other people	
We need each other to stay psychically healthy	
Community is an important part of every person's normal life	
Material Values	.71
Money is very important to me	
Money is something I cannot imagine my life without	
Purpose	
Deed	.73
An authentic spiritual life can be verified only by good deed	
An immoral life disproves an authentic spiritual life	
An authentic spiritual life always results in moral success	
Ultimate Truth	.85
Finding of the meaning and purpose of life is one of the most important goals in our life	
Life is only worthwhile when is a search for the sense of life	
Life without a search for the meaning and purpose is not much worth	
Happiness	.42
I believe that finding happiness in life is more important than finding the sense of life	
Do you agree that heading towards happiness is the most important in life?	
Everyone just wants to be happy, even if others need to suffer because of it a little	
Existence	.35
Pain and suffering often are reason for reorientation and re-examination of life	
Going through tragic things happening in life makes me depressed	
I need to suffer sometimes, as everyone	
Sacrifice	.82
Authentically spiritual person does a lot for others	
Spirituality helps to distance of own selfishness and egocentrism to be more helpful for others	
Spiritual people can do more for others than non-spiritual persons	
Formation	.79
Spiritual life should head towards practical personal improvement	
Spiritual life should develop personality	
Spirituality is also about formation of human's character	

Three core outcome variables of PMS (*Transcendence*, *Immanence*, *Purpose*) are predicted by latent variables *Community of Faith*, *Dialog with Self*, *Prayer*, and *Self-Esteem*.

The Community of Faith (CF) scale measured participant's relationship with religious institutions by three items (The Church is an institution I trust; I attend to the Church regularly;

I am provided with a spiritual counselling by a priest). Reliability statistics indicated a good internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha = .84$):

Dialog with Self (DS) scale was a four-item scale which measured participants attitudes toward self-reflection and dialog with one's own self, as an important part of spiritual development. Items included in the scale: Being yourself is more valuable than being rich; Spiritual life cannot exist without honest dialogue with one's own self; Dialogue with one's own self is an important aspect of spiritual life; Without inner dialog with self it is difficult to evaluate one's own life. Good internal consistency was reported (Cronbach's $\alpha = .70$).

Prayer scale was measured by two items (A prayer is a part of my everyday practice; Prayer helps me to deal with my personal problems). Internal consistency was reported to be strong (Cronbach's $\alpha = .91$).

The Self-Esteem (SE) scale (Rosenberg, 1989) comprises of ten items that measure self-evaluation of the person. However, recent findings have suggested a two-factor solution (Boduszek, Shevlin, Mallett, Hyland, & O'Kane 2012; Boduszek, Hyland, Dhingra, & Mallett, 2013). Namely *Positive Self-Esteem* (PS-E: 5-items) and *Negative Self-Esteem* (NS-E: 5-items). One example item of PS-E is, "I am able to do things as well as most other people"; while one example of NS-E is, "At times, I feel I am not good at all". Reliability statistics indicated an adequate to good internal consistency (PS-E: Cronbach's $\alpha = .66$; NS-E: Cronbach's $\alpha = .79$).

The core outcome variables of PMS were also predicted by four observed variables *Non-Violence Attitude* (NV). NV was measured by; *violence is in conflict to spirituality* on four-item Likert scale. The cultural attachment was measured by the variables *Music*, *Cinema*, and *TV*. *Music* was measured by; *I like to listen to current music*. *Cinema* was measured by a question: *how often you go to a cinema* with possible answers: 1) *almost never*, 2) *few times/year*, 3) *once/month* or 4) *once/week or more*. The *TV* was measured by the question:

how much time a day do you spend watching TV, and the possible answers were 1) 0-1h, 2) 1-3h, 3) 3-5h or 4) more than 5h.

Demographic variables

These included single observed item measures of *Age*, *Gender*, *Education*, and *Family*. *Age* as a continuous variable was measured by the question: *your age*. *Gender* was measured by the question: *your gender*, with two possible answers: *male* and *female*. *Education* was measured by the question: *what is your level of education*, with four possible answers: 1) *primary school*, 2) *secondary school*, 3) *unfinished College/University*, and 4) *College/University*. The *Family* was measured by the question: *you grew up in the in the family with* 1) *both parents*, 2) *one parent*, or 3) *no parents*.

Analysis

Preliminary analysis was conducted using SPSS 20 and descriptive statistics and Pearson's correlation coefficient were calculated. Further analysis used structural equation modelling (SEM) with maximum likelihood estimation (ML) using AMOS v20. SEM employs both a structural and a measurement level. At a structural level, the conceptual model of the *Postmodern Model of Spirituality* (Figure 5) was specified and estimated. SEM employs two data analytic methods: path analysis (PA) and confirmatory factor analysis (FA). Thus, within an SEM, the structural and measurement elements of analysis are estimated simultaneously (McCallum & Austin, 2000).

For the measurement level, eight latent variables were specified and estimated (the *Transcendent* and *Immanent* dimensions of spirituality, *Purpose* of spirituality, *Positive Self-Esteem* [PS-E], *Negative Self-Esteem* [NS-E], participation in *Community of Faith* [CF], *Dialog with Self* [DS] and *Prayer*) using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) in order to determine the factor structure and factor loadings of measured variables. This was also used to assess the fit between the data and the pre-established PMS structural model. A covariance matrix was computed, and the parameters were estimated using maximum likelihood estimator.

Goodness-of-fit indices were used to assess the fit of the model: chi-square (χ^2), Root-Mean-Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA; Steiger, 1990) with 90% confidence interval (90% CI), Comparative Fit Index (CFI; Bentler, 1990), and Incremental Fit Index (IFI; Bollen, 1989). A non-significant chi-square (Kline, 2005) and values above .95 for the CFI and IFI are considered to reflect a good model fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999; Vandenberg & Lance, 2000). However, for CFI and IFI, values above .90 indicate adequate fit (Bentler, 1990; Hu & Bentler, 1999). RMSEA (estimates lack of fit compared to the saturated model) values less than .05 suggest good fit and values up to .08 indicate reasonable errors of approximation in the population (Browne & Cudeck, 1993).

Results

Zero-order correlations were conducted between selected variables in order to test for their inclusion within the one structural model. Results indicated overall, variables were sufficiently correlated (see Table 2). Additionally, means and SDs are presented for all variables.

Table 2
Descriptive Statistics (Means and SDs) and correlations between PMS variables

Variables	M	SD	G	F	COM	MV	UT	HAP	EX	SAC	FOR	D	SEP	SEN	CF	DS
G	8.27	2.44	---													
F	8.24	2.70	.80**	---												
CO	9.38	1.61	.37**	.40**	---											
MV	8.71	1.52	.08	.15*	.41**	---										
UT	7.76	2.33	.49**	.54**	.38**	.12	---									
HA	8.37	1.64	-.03	.10	.14*	.26**	.14*	---								
EX	7.77	1.75	.31**	.34**	.33**	.07	.32**	.12	---							
SA	7.45	2.23	.61**	.61**	.41**	.07	.70**	.09	.38**	---						
FO	8.12	2.06	.53**	.57**	.42**	.12	.64**	.13	.39**	.71**	---					
D	7.49	2.08	.60**	.67**	.39**	.18**	.64**	.10	.41**	.70**	.71**	---				
PS-E	16.24	1.95	.18**	.16*	.32**	.24**	.12	.22**	.07	.12	.18**	.07	---			
NS-E	14.28	3.20	-.24**	-.28**	-.13	-.12	-.42**	-.27**	-.24**	-.36**	-.33**	-.45**	.26**	---		
CF	8.30	3.14	.64**	.63**	.31**	.11	.39**	-.06	.23**	.45**	.43**	.57**	-.05	-.35**	---	
DS	11.86	2.18	.49**	.50**	.36**	.04	.55**	.15*	.44**	.60**	.65**	.57**	.19**	-.31**	.36**	---
Prayer	5.09	2.06	.78**	.83**	.34**	.06	.50**	.05	.29**	.58**	.57**	.61**	.09	-.38**	.69**	.46**

Note. M = Means; SD = Standard Deviations; G = God; F = Faith; CO = Community; MV = Material values; UT = Ultimate truth; HA = Happiness; EX = Existence; SA = Sacrifice; FO = Formation; D = Deed; PS-E = Positive self-esteem; NS-E = Negative self-esteem; CF = Community of faith; DS = Dialog with self; Statistical significance: * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

Model testing using SEM

The fit of the proposed PMS model was satisfactory ($\chi^2 = 922.96$, $df = 520$, $p < .05$; RMSEA = .05; CFI = .90; IFI = .90), explaining 90% of the variance in the purpose of spiritual life, 72% of the variance in the immanent dimension of spirituality, and 94% of variance in transcendent dimension of spirituality. The standardised and unstandardised path regression weights for the PMS model are presented in Table 3. The immanent dimension of spirituality was significantly predicted by positive self-esteem ($\beta = .66$, $p < .001$), negative self-esteem ($\beta = -.29$, $p < .01$), dialog with self ($\beta = .25$, $p < .05$); and by the demographic factors of family structure ($\beta = .19$, $p < .01$), participation in cultural-life ($\beta = .16$, $p < .05$), and non-violent attitudes ($\beta = .19$, $p < .05$). In relation to the transcendent dimension of spirituality, this was significantly predicted by dialog with self ($\beta = .18$, $p < .01$), prayer ($\beta = .89$, $p < .001$) and participants level of education ($\beta = .10$, $p < .01$). Finally, the purpose of spirituality dimension was significantly predicted by negative self-esteem ($\beta = -.20$, $p < .01$), participation in life of community of faith ($\beta = -.15$, $p < .05$), dialog with self ($\beta = .61$, $p < .001$), prayer ($\beta = .36$, $p < .001$) and non-violent attitudes ($\beta = .16$, $p < .001$). Interestingly; age, gender, music and TV were reported not to have any significant influence on either immanent, transcendent and purpose dimensions (see Figure 1).

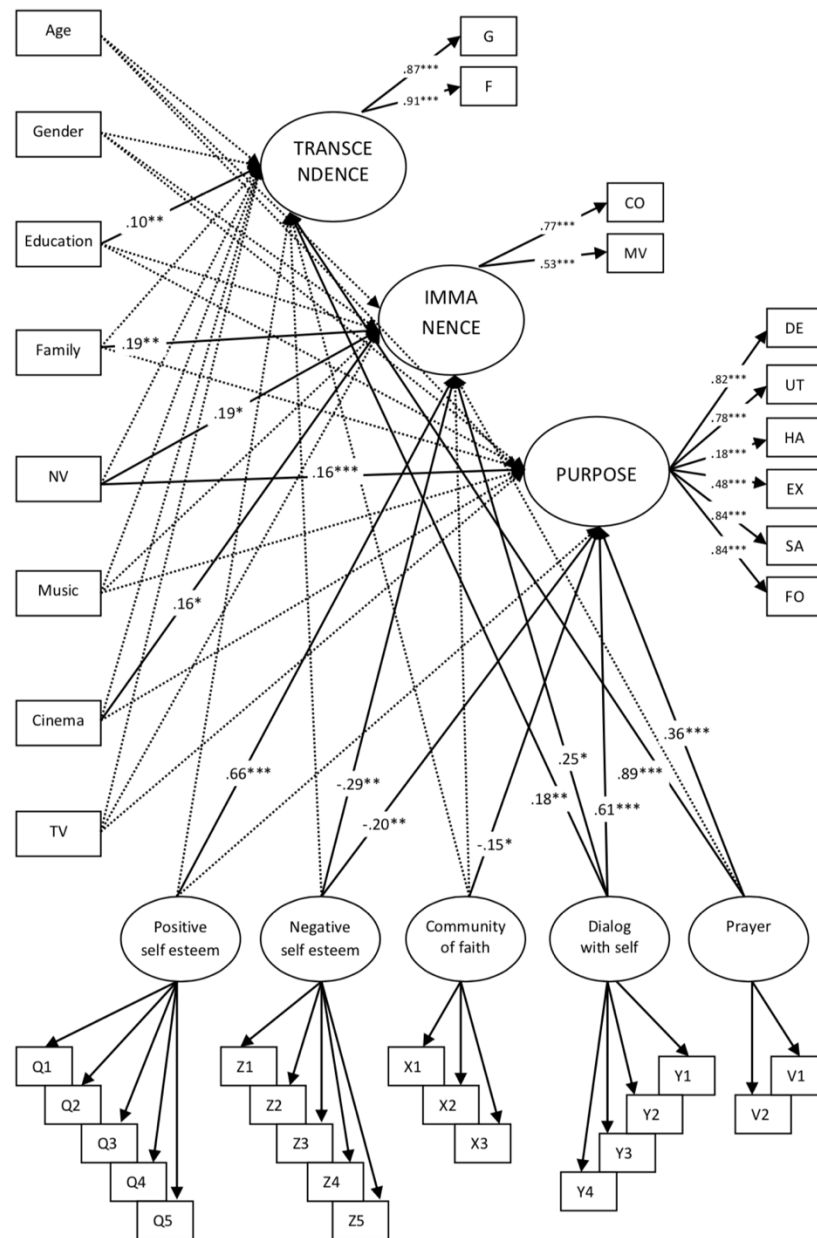


Figure 1. *Postmodern Model of Spirituality (PMS)*

Note: NV = Non-Violence Attitudes; TV = Television; G = God; F = Faith; CO = Community; MV = Material Values; DE = Deed; UT = Ultimate Truth; HA = Happiness; EX = Existence; SA = Sacrifice; FO = Formation; Q1-Q5, Z1-Z5, X1-X3, Y1-Y4, V1-V2 = Measures' items.

—→ significant correlations;→ non-significant correlations

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Table 3

Predictors of transcendence, immanence and purpose (SEM results)

Latent Variables		Predictor Variables	B	S.E.	β
Transcendence	<---	PS-E	-.12	.37	-.02
Immanence	<---	PS-E	1.72	.35	.66***
Purpose	<---	PS-E	.35	.29	.06
Transcendence	<---	NS-E	.32	.22	.08
Immanence	<---	NS-E	-.38	.15	-.29**
Purpose	<---	NS-E	-.58	.18	-.20**
Transcendence	<---	CF	-.05	.16	-.02
Immanence	<---	CF	.15	.09	.18
Purpose	<---	CF	-.26	.12	-.15*
Transcendence	<---	DS	1.21	.39	.18**
Immanence	<---	DS	.53	.24	.25*
Purpose	<---	DS	2.75	.44	.61***
Purpose	<---	Prayer	.65	.14	.36***
Immanence	<---	Prayer	-.05	.11	-.06
Transcendence	<---	Prayer	2.28	.21	.89***
Transcendence	<---	Age	.01	.00	.03
Immanence	<---	Age	-.01	.00	-.04
Purpose	<---	Age	-.01	.00	-.02
Purpose	<---	Gender	.21	.14	.06
Immanence	<---	Gender	.03	.11	.02
Transcendence	<---	Gender	.02	.17	.01
Purpose	<---	Education	.05	.08	.02
Immanence	<---	Education	-.04	.06	-.04
Transcendence	<---	Education	.31	.11	.10**
Transcendence	<---	Family	-.25	.26	-.03
Immanence	<---	Family	.46	.17	.19**
Purpose	<---	Family	-.23	.20	-.04
Transcendence	<---	Music	.01	.13	.01
Immanence	<---	Cinema	.16	.07	.16*
Purpose	<---	Television	.01	.08	.01
Immanence	<---	Music	-.02	.08	-.02
Purpose	<---	Music	-.04	.10	-.01
Transcendence	<---	Cinema	.06	.11	.02
Purpose	<---	Cinema	-.03	.09	-.02
Immanence	<---	Television	.10	.06	.10
Transcendence	<---	Television	-.01	.11	-.01
Purpose	<---	Non-Violence	.30	.08	.16***
Immanence	<---	Non-Violence	.16	.06	.19*
Transcendence	<---	Non-Violence	.16	.10	.06

Note. Statistical significance: * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Furthermore, standardised and un-standardised factor loadings with associated standard error values for each observed variable on their respective latent variable are also presented (see table 4). As can be observed, all factor loadings were significant and mostly sufficient in

terms of the strength. However, in regard to happiness (HAPP), this loaded quite weakly on its respective factor of *Purpose*.

Table 4

Factor loadings of PMS latent variables

Indicators		Latent Variable	B	S.E.	β
F	<---	Transcendence	1.00	---	.91***
G	<---	Transcendence	.87	.04	.87***
MV	<---	Immanence	1.00	---	.53***
COM	<---	Immanence	1.53	.22	.77***
FOR	<---	Purpose	1.00	---	.84***
SAC	<---	Purpose	1.08	.07	.84***
EX	<---	Purpose	.49	.06	.48***
HAPP	<---	Purpose	.17	.06	.18**
UT	<---	Purpose	1.05	.08	.78***
D	<---	Purpose	.97	.07	.82***
SE1	<---	PS-E	1.00	---	.54***
SE2	<---	PS-E	.85	.13	.50***
SE3	<---	PS-E	1.57	.19	.79***
SE4	<---	PS-E	1.40	.18	.72***
SE10	<---	PS-E	.75	.17	.33***
SE6	<---	NS-E	1.00	---	.68***
SE7	<---	NS-E	.87	.09	.68***
SE8	<---	NS-E	1.05	.11	.68***
SE9	<---	NS-E	.98	.11	.68***
SE5	<---	NS-E	.87	.10	.60***
CF1	<---	CF	1.00	---	.95***
CF2	<---	CF	.84	.04	.83***
CF3	<---	CF	.65	.05	.66***
Pray2	<---	Prayer	1.00	---	.90***
Pray1	<---	Prayer	1.06	.04	.92***
DS4	<---	DS	1.00	---	.50***
DS3	<---	DS	1.58	.21	.75***
DS2	<---	DS	1.76	.22	.82***
DS 1	<---	DS	.57	.12	.33***

Note. Statistical significance: * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Discussion

The main objective of this study was to validate the proposed PMS model in a large sample using SEM technique. Based on statistics provided in the previous section (CFI, IFI, and RMSEA) the model has demonstrated good construct validity and all latent constructs show good internal reliability. Put alternatively, a good-fitting PMS model is reasonably consistent with the data and so does not require re-specification. The core of the PMS consists of three dependent variables: *Transcendence*, *Immanence*, and *Purpose*, which represent the central structure of the evaluated concept of spirituality. These variables are constructed of predicting independent variables. Accordingly, *Transcendence* is represented by *God* and *Faith*, *Immanence* by *Community* and *Material Values* and *Purpose* by *Deed*, *Ultimate Truth*, *Happiness*, *Existence*, *Sacrifice*, and *Formation*. The core variables are predicted by another five dependent variables *PS-E*, *NS-E*, *Community of Faith*, *Dialog with Self* and *Prayer* which in turn are represented by questions. The core variables are also predicted by a group of independent variables represented by one question and therefore put as squares. These predictors are on the left side of the model as follows: *Age*, *Gender*, *Education*, *Family*, *Non-Violence*, *Music*, *Cinema*, and *TV*.

Interpretation of PMS

The transcendent dimension of spirituality was significantly predicted by the level of education, engagement in dialogue with self and time spent on private prayer. In regard to educational status, more educated people tended to be more associated with the transcendent domain of spirituality, suggesting that transcendence requires certain development of abstract thinking which expands along with educational engagement. Similarly, dialogue with one's own self sensitizes to a reality which is not palpable through material means. The inner dialogue reflects the ability to transcend an individual's perspective on their own life. However, prayer was found to have the strongest prediction of the transcendent sphere. Prayer creates a

significant relationship between the human being and God in divine reality. The essence of prayer is to establish and nurture dialogue, thus increasing a sense of moral awareness. Surprisingly though, a community of faith (e.g., Congregation of Church) did not have any significant impact; indicating to the individual rather than communal character of human relation to the transcendent reality of spirituality (cp. Hayman & Handal, 2006). This is not the only indicator of the individual character of current spirituality. Again, the findings of the study suggest that the association with a community of faith can discouragingly influence purposefulness of spiritual life. Each of the predictors significantly influencing the purpose of spirituality such as *NV* attitudes, *NS-E* or dialogue with self and prayer, refer to individual and personal qualities, while a community of faith refers to the communal and external frame, which is determined by relations within society or culture (*Music*, *Cinema* and *TV*). These cultural predictors, however, did not have any influence on the purpose of spirituality. The present findings revealed that the immanent sphere of spiritual life was significantly predicted by the character of the family, *NV* behaviour, *PS-E*, dialogue with self and association with culture. This would suggest that those who grew up in a complete family (with both parents) are more successful in developing the immanent dimension of their spirituality compared to those who come from incomplete families or were brought up without parents. Simplifying, people from incomplete families may find it more difficult to perceive the reality of spiritual life and engage in it from the immanent angle. Looking at the structural components of the immanent reality (*Community*, *Material Values*), there is an indication that these individuals struggle in dealing with other people and in managing material issues of life. Thus, these findings are supported by previous findings of Rovers et al. (2010), which also refer to the significance of family and community in the development of the immanent dimension of spirituality. Regarding the significance of culture and non-violence in the spiritual domain, the current findings are also supported by prior research. Culture (Beaudoin, 1998; Flanagan, 1999; Lynch, 2002; Finnegan, 2008; Porter, 2009; Perrin, 2010) and non-violence (Weiss, et al.,

2003) were previously theoretically linked with shaping current spiritual phenomena. Those with non-violent attitudes are likely to have more success in dealing with others, and interestingly, in managing material possessions. Furthermore, these findings identify the importance of self-esteem in the quality of spiritual life (cp. Johnson, Sandler & Griffin-Shelley, 1988; Bradshaw, 1988; Lindgren & Coursey, 1995; Crocker & Wolfe, 2001; Crocker & Park, 2004; Hawke, Hennen & Gallione, 2005). The negative perception of one's own self has a negative influence on immanence and purpose of spiritual life; positive self-esteem, on the other hand, encourages only the immanent dimension. Lastly, the findings indicated that individuals, who pay attention to their inner dialogue with self, potentially have a more highly developed immanent quality of their spirituality. Interestingly, those individuals who evaluate themselves more negatively in terms of *SE* face more problems in the practical application of their spiritual life. In sum, *NS-E* may prevent the ability to develop life purposes. Unexpectedly, a high level of *PS-E* does not change an ability to apply spirituality for practical purposes. Similarly, Galek et al. (2005) indicated that self-realization and happiness, which are concepts associated with self-esteem, have an influence on spirituality. Other variables which significantly influence the purpose of spiritual life refer to the engagement in dialogue with self and private prayer. The findings emphasize the importance of these two areas, especially inner dialogue, for shaping the purposefulness of spirituality. Engagement in development of self-awareness, reflecting on one's own being and/or prayer enables people's ability for turning intentions into practice and transition of internal spiritual experience into the external world of practice. The finding that dialogue with self and prayer are important aspects in the development of purpose as a spiritual domain is also in line with research of McCarroll-Butler (2005). However, interestingly, prayer does not influence the mundane spiritual domain as dialog with self does. Thus, the study distinguishes dialogue with self from prayer and clarifies that these predictors represent different domains and are not the same as they could be perceived. The development of the practical purpose of spirituality or the meaningfulness of

life was significantly influenced by *NV* attitudes, evaluation of self (NS-E), a community of faith, dialogue with self and prayer.

Overall the PMS model was found to adequately fit the data, with some of the predictors proving to be very influential in explaining the current phenomenon of spirituality. More specifically, dialogue with self-predicted all three dimensions of the spiritual model, suggesting that inner reflection is a very meaningful aspect of spiritual life within today's society. Another important factor in the development of spiritual life is prayer. Secularization of western societies does not destroy principles of spiritual life, especially around an individual's own prayer life. The importance of a non-violent attitude has been confirmed by the current findings as well as self-esteem that also has an important role. The development of spiritual life, however, is not dependent on age or gender. Finally, cultural factors, such as music and television, neither encourage nor distract from spiritual progress.

Justifications, Limitations, and Further Directions

The terminology used to name the scale (PMS) employs the term 'Postmodern'. This may raise the question as to why this term was chosen as opposed to the term 'Modern', which would also have been justified (Smart, 1997; Gallagher, 1998). In spite of this, there is a valid account that the current epoch differentiates from Modernism begun in the fifteenth century and that the Postmodernism has its own philosophy and time frame, separate from Modernism (Lyotard, 1979; Habermas & Ben-Habib, 1981; Rorty 1983; Lyotard 1993; Thompson, 1993; Lakeland, 1997; Adams, 1997/1998; Holtzhausen 2000; Kielkiewicz, 2013). Another argument supporting this decision is the fact that spirituality, as separate from the religion domain and as a new academic discipline, has appeared along with the arrival of Postmodernity. Its appearance was stimulated by the postmodern dynamic and its characteristics are allied with this epoch (De Certeau, 1988; Lakeland 1997; Sheldrake, 2005; Bottum, 2010).

Some limitations could be laid at the feet of this study, such as the number of participants (268) and the fact that they were drawn from the same country. Another possible

limitation is the fact that the population of the Republic of Ireland is weakly diversified in terms of religion, as approximately 80 percent of the population is identified as Catholics (CSO, 2016). The demographic data of this study reports that about half of the participants (53.7%) were Roman Catholics ($n = 144$), and 41.4 percent represented other religions or no religion ($n = 111$). In spite of much lower than the total percentage of the entire population of the country, there was still a majority of Catholic participants than representatives of other denominations, and this could have an impact on the findings of the study. It could be argued that this fact alone could shape the results in terms of association of religious predictors (i.e. *Prayer*) versus non-religious ones (i.e. *DS*).

Conclusion

Since the beginning of Postmodernity, the split of religion and spirituality has brought a need for a modern conceptualization of spirituality. This study addressed the majority of the main theoretical concepts appearing for the last forty years within different academic domains, including; religious, psychological, and social. A theoretical concept (PMS) was developed and tested among 268 participants of a non-purposive sample of the European population.

Implications

The findings of the study, disclosing the identity of current spirituality, reveal vital dynamics between explored variables and opens the way to an understanding of the domain in the current context. This study is a response to the dilemma of its identity, in which postmodern spirituality has found itself after separation from religion. The domain is still rooted in its Christian origins of faith, prayer and non-violent stands. It still embraces holistically human existence with a broad spectrum of its components, including transcendent (T), immanent (I) and direction with purposefulness of human life (P). It also remains steady regarding respect to the traditional model of family, at least within the immanent dimension of it. However, it would be false to declare that the domain does not evolve. The results indicate to a number of

transitions which are observable within the domain of current spirituality from its Christian origins. The first of them is the significant correlation between education and culture. These two variables could appear as 'out of the box' for the original perception of the spiritual domain and indicate the alliance of this domain within these dimensions. However, the more crucial is a stronger association of self-reflection (DS) over prayer in relation to all three core dependent variables (T, I, P) and regard to the psychological qualities for the entire perception of the domain (PS-E, NS-E). These aspects do not reflect purely the identity of spirituality but indicate to the significant transition of the language within the spiritual domain. Original communal and theological core of spirituality is becoming replaced with the individual language of psychology. The decrease in the importance of a community of faith represented by churches and religious congregations (CF: $-.15^*$) clearly indicates this tendency, observable anyway in decreasing number of people attending church services.

The conclusion can be made that the study reveals an important tendency in the manner of practice of current spirituality. After taking to consideration above arguments, a new method of practicing spirituality becomes visible. If the traditional language of spirituality (biblical, theological, philosophical) changes to the psychological and educational one, it is a strong indicator to movement of the spiritual phenomenon to the centres that speak this language. Consequently, these centres present already higher potential in the application of the method for spirituality. The domain as a scholarly discipline and practical domain is keen on finding its home in education and academic environments. Psychology seems to respond very accurately to the need of new home for spirituality and counselling and psychotherapy, which use academic psychological language and base their practice on an academic approach to human being seems to have an already wide spectrum of practical tools to offer. Theological and religious language still appears to be valid however, the findings show that the psychological understanding is more prominent. This research reveals also another practical implication for those who develop their spiritual life. The significant predictors of dependent

variables *Transcendence*, *Immanence* and *Purpose* indicate what stimulates the progress of spiritual growth. *Education* stimulates the development of the transcendent sphere of life, *NV* attitude and *SE* immanent and purposefulness. *Prayer* is crucial for *Transcendence* and *Purpose* and *DS* creates growth of all three components of spiritual life. This knowledge may be utilized within formational and mental health environments to facilitate peoples' wellbeing, personal development or social inclusion.

Recommendations

This study has proven that this subject is of interest and popular concern. For this reason, consideration should be given to conducting similar research within populations of different religious denominations and various cultural traditions. As the Irish population is strongly embedded in Catholicism, it is recommended to validate the findings among the population of different religions, diversified culturally or culturally dissimilar. The limitation of the number of participants could be also addressed and the study could be conducted among a larger number of participants.

The findings of the study indicate which predictors stimulate the development of dependent spiritual dimensions. It would be vital to examine, practically, the accuracy of the findings within some formational fields such as psychotherapy or education. For instance, an emphasis placed on the development of self-esteem, dialogue with self, non-violent attitudes and family life, factually stimulates the growth of the immanent dimension of life as the study informs. The growth of purpose and transcendent dimension in human life could be tested through the development of appropriate aspects of life. Undertaking such studies would provide an applied knowledge and open a path towards practical application of the findings within above and related fields.

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